CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 16 MARCH 1995 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE CONFERENCE ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A VERBATIM TEXT EXTRACTED FROM A SPEECH GIVEN BY PRESIDENT CLINTON ON 1 MARCH 1995 CONCERNING VARIOUS ARMS CONTROL AND NON-PROLIFERATION ISSUES

I have the honour to forward to you a verbatim text extracted from a speech given by President Clinton on 1 March 1995, concerning various arms control and non-proliferation issues.

Could you please take the appropriate steps to register this text as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament, and to have it distributed to all member delegations and non-member States participating in the work of the Conference.

(Signed): Stephen J. Ledogar
Ambassador

VERBATIM EXTRACT

Speech given by President William J. Clinton

1 March 1995

The Richard Nixon Center

(Arms Control and Non-proliferation Issues)

Over the past two years, the United States has made real progress in lifting the threat of nuclear weapons. Now, in 1995, we face a year of particular decision in this era - a year in which the United States will pursue the most ambitious agenda to dismantle and fight the spread of weapons of mass destruction since the atom was split.

We know that ours is an enormously complex and difficult challenge. There is no single policy, no silver bullet, that will prevent or reverse the spread of weapons of mass destruction. But we have no more important task. Arms control makes us not only safer, it makes us stronger. It is a source of strength. It is one of the most effective insurance policies we can write for the future of our children.

Our administration has focused on two distinct, but closely connected areas - decreasing and dismantling existing weapons, and preventing nations or groups from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and the means to deliver them. We have made progress on both fronts.

As the result of an agreement President Yeltsin and I reached, for the first time in a generation Russian missiles are not pointed at our cities or our citizens. We have greatly reduced the lingering fear of an accidental nuclear launch. We put into force the START I Treaty with Russia that will eliminate from both our countries delivery systems that carry more than 9,000 nuclear warheads - each with the capacity to incinerate a city the size of Atlanta.

START I, negotiated by two Republican administrations and put into force by this Democratic administration, is the first treaty that requires the nuclear Powers actually to reduce their strategic arsenal. Both our countries are dismantling the weapons as fast as we can. And thanks to a far-reaching verification system, including on-site inspections which began in Russia and the United States today, each of us knows exactly what the other is doing.

And, again, through the far-sighted programme devised by Senators Nunn and Lugar, we are helping Russia and the other newly-independent States to eliminate nuclear forces in transport, safeguard and destroy nuclear weapons and material.

Ironically, some of the changes that have allowed us to reduce the world's stockpile of nuclear weapons have made our non-proliferation efforts harder. The breakup of the Soviet Union left nuclear materials dispersed throughout the newly-independent States. The potential for theft of nuclear

materials, therefore, increased. We face the prospect of organized criminals entering the nuclear smuggling business. Add to this the volatile mix, the fact that a lump of plutonium the size of a soda can is enough to build a bomb, and the urgency of the effort to stop the spread of nuclear materials should be clear to all of us.

That is why from our first day in office we have launched an aggressive coordinated campaign against international terrorism and nuclear smuggling. We are cooperating closely with our allies, working with Russia and the other newly-independent States, improving security at nuclear facilities, and strengthening multilateral export controls.

One striking example of our success is Operation Sapphire, the airlift of nearly 600 kilograms of highly-enriched uranium - enough to make dozens of bombs from Kazakhstan to the United States for disposal. We have also secured agreements with Russia to reduce the uranium and plutonium available for nuclear weapons, and we are seeking a global treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Our patient, determined diplomacy also succeeded in convincing Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty and give up the nuclear weapons left on their territory when the Soviet Union dissolved. One of our administration's top priorities was to assure that these new countries would become non-nuclear nations, and now we are also achieving that goal.

Because of the effort, four potential suppliers of ballistic missiles - Russia, Ukraine, China and South Africa - have all agreed to control the transfer of these missiles and related technology, pulling back from the nuclear precipice has allowed us to cut United States defence expenditures for strategic weapons by almost two thirds, a saving of about $20,000 million a year, savings which can be shifted to vital needs such as boosting the readiness of our armed forces, reducing the deficit, putting more police on our own streets. By spending millions to keep or take weapons out of the hands of our potential adversaries, we are saving billions in arms costs and putting it to better use.

Now in this year of decision, our ambition for the future must be even more ambitious. If our people are to know real lasting security, we have to redouble our arms control, non-proliferation and antiterrorist efforts. We have to do everything we can to avoid living with the twenty-first century version of fallout shelters and duck-and-cover exercises to prevent another World Trade Center tragedy.

In just four days we mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Nothing is more important to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons than extending the treaty indefinitely and unconditionally. And that is why I have asked the Vice-President to lead our delegation to the NPT Conference this April and to work as hard as we can to make sure we succeed in getting that indefinite extension.

The NPT is the principal reason why scores of nations do not now possess nuclear weapons; why the doomsayers were wrong. One-hundred and seventy-two nations have made NPT the most widely subscribed arms limitation treaty in history for one overriding reason - it is in their self-interest to do so. Non-nuclear weapon States that sign on to the treaty pledge never to acquire them. Nuclear weapons States vow not to help others obtain nuclear weapons, to facilitate the peaceful uses of atomic energy and to pursue nuclear arms control and disarmament - commitments I strongly reaffirm, along with our determination to attain universal membership in the treaty.

Failure to extend NPT indefinitely could open the door to a world of nuclear trouble. Pariah nations with rigid idealogies and expansionist ambitions would have an easier time acquiring terrible weapons, and countries that have chosen to forego the nuclear option would then rethink their position; they would certainly be tempted to reconsider that decision.

To further demonstrate our commitment to the goals of the treaty, today I have ordered that 200 tons of fissile material, enough for thousands of nuclear weapons, be permanently withdrawn from the United States nuclear stockpile. Two-hundred tons of fissile material that will never again be used to build a nuclear weapon.

A second key goal of ours is ratifying START II. Once in effect, that treaty will eliminate delivery systems from Russian and American arsenals that carry more than 5,000 weapons. The major reductions under START I, together with START II, will enable us to reduce by two thirds the number of strategic warheads deployed at the height of the cold war. At my urging, the Senate has already begun hearings on START II, and I am encouraged by the interest of the senators from both parties in seeking quick action. I commend the Senate for the action taken so far, and I urge again the approval of the treaty as soon as possible.

President Yeltsin and I have already instructed our experts to begin considering the possibility after START II is ratified of additional reductions and limitations on remaining nuclear forces. We have a chance to further lift the nuclear cloud, and we dare not miss it.

To stop the development of new generations of nuclear weapons, we must also quickly complete negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Last month I extended a nuclear testing moratorium that I put into effect when I took office. And we revised our negotiating position to speed the conclusion of the treaty while reaffirming our determination to maintain a safe and reliable nuclear stockpile.

We will also continue to work with our allies to fully implement the agreement we reached with North Korea, first to freeze, then to dismantle its nuclear programme, all under international monitoring. The critics of this agreement, I believe, are wrong. The deal does stop North Korea's nuclear programme, and it does commit Pyongyang to roll it back in the years to come.

I have not heard another alternative proposal that is not either unworkable or foolhardy, or one that our allies in the Republic of Korea and Japan, the nations most directly affected, would fail to support.

If North Korea fulfils its commitment, the Korean Peninsula and the entire world will clearly be less threatened and more secure. The NPT, START II, the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, the North Korean Agreement, they top our agenda for the year ahead. There are other critical tasks we also face if we want to make every American more secure, including winning Senate ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention, negotiating legally binding measures to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, clarifying the ABM Treaty so as to secure its viability while permitting highly effective defences against theater missile attacks, continuing to support regional arms control efforts in the Middle East and elsewhere, and pushing for the ratification of conventional weapons which, among other things, would help us to reduce the suffering caused by the tens of millions of anti-personnel mines which are plaguing millions of people all across this world.

My friends, this is a full and challenging agenda. There are many obstacles ahead. We cannot achieve it if we give in to a new isolationism. But I believe we can do no less than make every effort to complete it.